

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1. A container for packaging perishable food items comprising:  
a tubular body portion having two ends, said tubular body portion having a cross-section suitable for holding a perishable food item, wherein at least a portion of said tubular body is substantially transparent;  
one end of said body portion being closed and the other end of said body portion having an open mouth; and  
said open mouth is adapted to be sealed.
2. The container according to Claim 1 wherein the cross-section of said tubular body portion is shaped to have a flat bottom.
3. The container according to Claim 2 wherein said flat bottom has an undulating profile at each side forming a trough-like area.
4. The container according to Claim 1 wherein the cross-section of said body portion is cylindrical.
5. The container according to Claim 1 wherein the cross-section of said body portion is generally rectangular.
6. The container according to Claim 1 wherein said seal is a heat sealable film.
7. The container according to Claim 1 wherein said seal is an endcap.
8. The container according to Claim 7 wherein said endcap is attached to the body of the container by friction-fit or a tack-weld.
9. The container according to Claim 7 wherein said endcap is attached to the body of the container by screw threads

10. The container according to Claim 1 wherein indicia is affixed to said container.

11. The container according to Claim 1 wherein said at least a portion of said tubular body is opaque.

12. The container according to Claim 1 further comprising a lip projecting radially from the periphery of said mouth opening.

13. The container according to Claim 1 wherein the interior of said tubular body portion is coated with an anti-fogging agent.

14. The container according to Claim 1 wherein the atmosphere of said container is manipulated to optimize storing conditions.

15. A process for packaging perishable food items comprising:

- a. providing a container comprising a tubular body portion having two ends; one end of said body portion being closed and the other end of said body portion having an open mouth; and said open mouth is adapted to be sealed;
- b. positioning said container for loading said perishable food item;
- c. placing said perishable food item into said container;
- d. modifying the atmosphere inside said container to maximize storage conditions, and
- e. sealing said container.

16. The process according to Claim 15 wherein said perishable food item is loaded into said container with a chute and plunger.

17. The process according to Claim 15 wherein said atmosphere is modified in a vacuum chamber.

18. The process according to Claim 15 wherein said atmosphere is selected from oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, carbon monoxide, and blends of the foregoing gases.

19. The process according to Claim 15 wherein said perishable food item is fresh red meat.